

KYODAN SLOWLY BEGINS TO REGAIN MOMENTUM

A major action of the July 14-15 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Kyodan was the approval, with a few changes, of the nominees for membership on the Kyodan's standing committees. Also, a new committee was created to deal with the issue of Buraku discrimination (see KNL #95, June 20, 1975) and has been given high priority.

At this writing, six of the nine standing commissions and committees have met, organized, elected officers (see box below) and have begun to normalize functions that have been slowed or paralyzed over the past six and half years.

The Ministerial Qualifications Commission, which has been the center of confusion and debate, has convened twice. One of the qualifications for membership on the commission was that members were to have no direct relationships with any of the seven Kyodan-related seminaries. Officers were chosen from areas remote from the centers of theological education.

Some of the practical and theological problems the commission will be struggling with are: 1) the Kyodan's relation to seminaries; 2) the ministry in contemporary society; 3) qualification examinations and standards; 4) students who withdrew from seminary; 5) ministry of the laity.

The commission members hope to meet monthly but budget considerations may make this impossible.

Three of the four sub-committees of the Commission on Mission--Evangelism, Social Concerns and Ecumenical Ministries--have met and elected officers. Inasmuch as the four chairpersons of the committees are on the Commission on Mission as representatives of their committees, the commission itself will not convene until the Committee on Education has met.

Both of the officers of the Evangelism Committee, the Rev. Akasaka and the Rev. Suzuki, are from outside the Tokyo area. The Social Concerns chairperson, the Rev.

Tokunaga, has been one of the active "problem poser" leaders.

The Committee on Ecumenical Ministries has continued to function through the period of the Kyodan's polarization. It is taking up a request from the Church of Ponape for an agriculturally trained clergyman to serve in a Special Development Project in Ponape.

The Special Buraku Discrimination Committee, composed of seven persons, elected Vice Moderator Ono as chairperson and Executive Committee member Saeki as secretary. Ono, who serves the Kyoto Heian Church, has been interested in this issue for some time, and Kyoto is one of the areas where the problem is centered.

The committee, which has already met twice, will hold a two-day meeting in Kobe October 20-21, when a lay person and a pastor raised in Buraku areas will give preliminary statements, to be followed by general discussion and planning. The Committee has called the Rev. Sanji Higashioka of the Hikone Church to be a part-time executive secretary and voted to request a budget from the Kyodan of ¥1.5 million in 1975 and ¥3.4 million for 1976. Higashioka has been involved in Buraku liberation work for about 20 years.

So far the committee has been working on its basic approach to the problem and is proceeding carefully in view of the political, theological and social currents involved. The committee, now composed of three lay persons and four clergy, will be enlarging its membership in the future.

Commission on Ministerial Qualifications

Chairperson: Rev. Takashi Suga; Secretary: Rev. Hiroshi Omiya
Committee on Evangelism

Chairperson: Rev. Eiichi Akasaka; Secretary: Rev. Shogo Suzuki
Committee on Social Concerns

Chairperson: Rev. Goro Tokunaga; Secretary: Rev. Hisao Hayashi
Committee on Ecumenical Ministries

Chairperson: Rev. Kenji Ozaki; Secretary: Mrs. Kyo Takase
Commission on Examination of Financial Reports (Budget)

Chairperson: Mr. Masaaki Ozaki; Secretary: Rev. Osamu Takahashi
Special Committee on Buraku Discrimination

Chairperson: Rev. Ichiro Ono; Secretary: Rev. Yoichiro Saeki

STUDY ABROAD--in Japanese

The first participants in a new program of overseas study open to persons without special proficiency in English left Tokyo September 8 for a 3-month course at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.

The four Kyodan pastors and two pastors of the Reformed Church in Japan (*Nippon Kirisuto Kaikakuha Kyokai*) will receive training in pastoral counseling and practical aspects of the pastoral ministry, working through an interpreter.

The cooperative plan between the Presbyterian Church, U.S. and the two churches in Japan to which it is related was initiated through the offices of Kyodan General Secretary George Hanabusa and Dr. In Sik Kim, Asia Secretary of the General Executive Board of PCUS.

The Rev. Tatsunosuke Kokubo of Tajiri Church, will serve as interpreter as well as participant. The other Kyodan members are the Rev. Minoru Takahashi, Nakajo Church; the Rev. Kazue Nishimagi, Muikamachi Church; the Rev. Atsuo Jinnouchi, Ube Midoribashi Church. All are men with 10 to 20 years' experience in the ministry and serve churches in the 25 to 50 membership category.

TELEPHONE COUNSELLORS VISIT GERMANY

A group of forty persons, many of whom take the calls of troubled persons dialling the *Inochi no Denwa* 24-hour telephone counselling service, are visiting similar centers in five German cities during a four-week stay in Europe. Leader of the tour is Ruth Hetcamp, Missionary of the MBK (Mission Bad Salzufleng or Women's Bible Movement), who initiated the telephone counselling service in Japan.

In early September the group was to attend a West Germany Counsellors' Conference on "The Meaning of Life," a theme with which counsellors in Japan are dealing daily in calls--particularly from young people--who feel desperate because they have nothing to live for.

Visits to social work centers, private homes and mission agencies in Germany are on the itinerary, along with tours in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France.

Participants range in age from 15 to 70, although the majority are women in their 40s.

SCHNEISS/MURAKAMI--personnel exchange

The Rev. Paul Schneiss, Secretary for East Asia of the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Sudwestdeutschland (EMS) joined the Kyodan staff on September 1 as an exchange executive secretary from the German churches. Schneiss, who speaks fluent Japanese, will be associated with the work of the Kyodan's Committees on Evangelism and Social Concerns and, in addition, act as co-director of the Tomizaka Seminar House in Tokyo for a three-year period.

Schneiss served in Japan from 1957 to 1962 as a missionary of the West Germany Leibenzell Mission, being involved in evangelistic outreach in Ibaragi Prefecture. After serving in the pastorate in Germany and doing graduate studies in theology at Heidelberg University, he became associated with the German East Asia Mission and EMS, making frequent trips to Japan, Taiwan and Korea.

In Germany, the Rev. Hiroshi Murakami has been serving in the EMS headquarters in Stuttgart as a research secretary and Japan Affairs Secretary.

The exchange of secretaries provides an opportunity for churches in partnership to draw closer together through sharing personnel not only at the grass roots but also at the staff level.

"PUT THE VERSE INTO YOUR WORDS"

Members of the laity, long accustomed to Bible studies administered in lecture form, did their own "translations" of Scripture into their personal vocabularies as part of the annual Summer Seminar for the Laity held in Tozanso in late August. For many present, this was their first experience in depth-and-encounter Bible study.

Another "first" was the introduction to the work of Kyodan missionaries, the Rev. and Mrs. Kenichiro Mochizuki of Thailand and the Rev. and Mrs. Katsuichi Yamazato of Bolivia, in video-cassettes of their reports to the Committee on Ecumenical Ministries and a *Mainichi Shimbun* movie on Mochizuki's work.

THE PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

with the Japan Bible Society

As the Japan Bible Society celebrates the first 100 years of Bible distribution in Japan and enters the second century, there is a new captain at the helm. He is the Rev. Hiroshi Shimmi, Kyodan minister, Biblical scholar, teacher and quiet crusader for human freedoms, who assumed the position of General Secretary of the JBS in April.

The Scottish Bible Society began Bible distribution in Japan in 1875, followed by the British and American Bible Societies. The Japan Bible Society was established in 1937 and in 1968 became financially independent. At the present time it is the only self-supporting society among Asian members of the United Bible Societies and contributes \$6,000 to world Bible Society work.

Today, when the number of people on church rolls barely exceeds one million, it is always surprising to realize that the annual distribution of Bibles, New Testaments, portions and selections is 6 to 7 million.

Centennial celebrations were concentrated on one day--September 15--with 20 representatives from Bible Societies in other countries among the many guests attending. The 100th anniversary has also been taken up in mass media, reflecting the comparatively widespread interest in the Bible--from the planes of literature and culture.

Special anniversary publishing events include: 1) The Bible Society's 100 Years of History; 2) commemorative editions of the Bible; 3) a new translation of the Gospel of Luke--the first fruits of a team of Protestant and Catholic translators.

When the Bible Society set out to find a successor for the Rev. Shozo Miyauchi, who retired in 1973--a man to help chart the course for the next 100 years--it sought, in the words of Board Chairman Chitose Kishi, "someone who loves the Bible, is interested in international aspects of Bible Society work, has good leadership ability, and maintains good relations with Japanese churches." Their unanimous choice was Hiroshi Shimmi, 53, who was then teaching at Okinawa Christian College.

Since coming to the Bible House, located in the busy downtown Ginza area of Tokyo, Shimmi has been caught up in the swirl of anniversary activities of the Bible Society, with which he admits having had little prior contact.

Although Shimmi was not in on the original plans for the Common Bible, he is enthusiastic about the Joint Translation Committee, most of whose 39 members are scholars in their 30s and 40s. Their assignment is to

produce a translation that will appeal to and be understandable to the more than 99% non-Christian population. Shimmi is proud of the format of the new Bible--heavier paper, modern book style. "This will hold its own among the modern books on any shelf," he says. The New Testament will be published in 1976, the Old Testament in 1978-79, and the Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature in the early 1880s.

"My image of Bible Society work has changed since coming into this office," Shimmi said. "This spring I visited Bible Societies in other countries and saw how they are making ambitious approaches to modern people, using cartoons, photographs, topical selections. They are also doing exciting things in cooperation with societies in other countries." The international aspect particularly interests Shimmi, who has found many friends from youth work days among his new associates in other countries.

"In many places in Asia and Africa, the Bible must be translated into numerous dialects or the target of Bible distribution is the 'new literate,'" Shimmi observed. "In Japan, we speak only one language and everyone is literate, but there are many, many school children and university students.... They represent our 'new readers.'"

Despite the large number of Bibles and portions sold, Shimmi feels that many who buy or receive the Bible don't know how to read it. A new project is to develop helps for teaching the Bible, drawing on experienced teachers from a variety of situations.

The biggest challenge Shimmi sees is maintaining a balance between "liberal and conservative elements." Although he has a wide acquaintance among Biblical scholars and international church leaders, he says he has had little contact up to now with "conservative" groups in Japan. But Kishi feels "Shimmi is such a good scholar and so well versed in Biblical criticism that he can talk with almost anyone."

Shimmi comes to his new post with an impressive list of writings and translations dealing with the Inter-Testamental period. He has taught at the Science and Engineering College of Aoyama Gakuin University and Okinawa Christian College. He helped introduce Amnesty International into Japan and is known for his clear support of academic, religious and political freedoms. A Tokyo Union Theological Seminary graduate, he studied at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and served with the World Council of Churches.

COMMON BIBLE RESOLVES PROPER NOUN DIFFERENCES

Protestant and Catholic scholars working on the Common Bible have, as might be expected, run into many thorny problems, according to Father Bernadin Schneider, OFM, co-chairman of the Editorial Committee.

One of the most difficult decisions was how to transcribe* the name of "Jesus Christ." Japanese Protestants have generally spoken of *Iesu Kirisuto*, Catholics have referred to *Iezusu Kirisuto*, and Orthodox, whose tradition stems from the Russian Orthodox Church, have used the term *Iisusu Harisutosu*.

Translators spent many hours in the first six years of their work hammering out basic principles for rendering proper names into Japanese. As a rule, the Common Bible would use the phonetic reading of the original language--in the Old Testament, primarily Hebrew, in the New Testament, primarily Greek. Transcriptions easy to pronounce in Japanese would be preferred. For geographic names in common use, modern Japanese usage would be adopted, for instance, *Ejiputo* instead of *Mitsuraimu*.

On the basis of these principles, the transcription of the name "Jesus Christ" first proposed was *Iezusu Kurisutosu*, from the Greek. The form *Iezusu* was adopted as being truly ecumenical, not a compromise from any viewpoint, and embodying elements of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox forms.

But various considerations led to the choice of *Kirisuto* over *Kurisutosu*. One was the fact that "Christ" originally was not a proper name but a title. Furthermore, the form *Kirisuto* is in wide usage in Japan and a part

of many institution and periodical names. Thus it was decided to continue that usage, making the full designation, *Iezusu Kirisuto*.

Readers familiar with present versions of the Bible will find many other new readings. "Moses," which was heretofore read *Moize* or *Mōse*, will be transcribed *Mōshe*, from the Hebrew. "Pontius Pilate" will be transcribed from the Latin form *Pontius Piratusu*.

The use of the Greek nominative for names results in the following changes from the 1957 Japan Bible Society translation, in wide use, and the new Common Bible:

English	1957 JBS	Common Form	Kana
Matthew	Matai	Mataiosu	マタイオス
Mark	Maruko	Marukosu	マルコス
Luke	Ruka	Rukasu	ルカス
John	Yohane	Yohannesu	ヨハネス
Peter	Petero	Petorusu	ペトロス
Paul	Pauro	Paurosus	パウロス

*Japanese is a syllabic language; foreign names are transcribed by means of a phonetic syllabary known as *katakana*.

TSUDA WITHDRAWS FROM CCA POSITION

The June issue of KNL announced the appointment of Mamoru Tsuda to the position of secretary for education of the Christian Council in Asia. Subsequently Mr. Tsuda advised the CCA that, due to the need for additional time to complete his graduate thesis, he would not be able to join the staff in September as anticipated and was therefore withdrawing his acceptance of the appointment.

COPIES AVAILABLE OF MODERATOR TODA'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE KYODAN

Copies of the paper presented to the Consultation on United Churches in Toronto in June by Moderator Isuke Toda, titled "A Report on The United Church of Christ in Japan and Questions Raised by Its Experience," are available on request from the KNL. In the 6-page paper the Moderator reviews the factors underlying the formation of the United Church, discusses weaknesses and errors in that process, the events that occurred in 1970 and their meaning, and the "gradual recovery," with an analysis of the various issues now being worked out through the process of "dialogue."